

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

As a citizen, I and all my fellow citizens, own a share of the air waves. It is time that our "contract" with broadcasters who use these airways for free be honored. In exchange for the use of OUR airwaves, they are supposed to be providing public interest programming. This means not partisan ads but informative coverage of issues of interest to voter and of candidates. I and my fellow citizens want to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect our lives. I am not only greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming, but feel that an injustice is being done to the citizens of our country who are the real owners of these airwaves.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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